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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6175

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July 2, 2014

Monsieur François Hollande
Président de la République
Palais de l'Elysée
55, rue du faubourg Saint-Honoré
75008 Paris

Dear President Hollande:

I write to provide thoughts on recent reports that your government may be looking at lifting France's ban on hydraulic fracturing. Beyond a clear endorsement of any proposals to assuage opposition to the ban on fracking comes my sincere understanding of the opportunity your country has before it by allowing access to your own resources. I do believe a decision to lift the ban on hydraulic fracturing would be both environmentally and economically beneficial, establishing the option of providing increased resources and feedstock to your manufacturing sector while creating well-paying jobs for your sluggish economy and struggling young adults. Accordingly, I humbly submit the following thoughts with respect for the domestic economic challenges France currently faces.

As was recently reported in the Los Angeles Times:

If the rosy forecasts are correct, France is sitting on one of the biggest deposits of shale gas in Western Europe, enough to supply the country for decades and even some neighboring ones as well. French companies such as energy giant Total already boast the know-how for conducting the hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, needed to extract the natural gas.

The Los Angeles Times goes on to further state:

At a time when Europe is talking urgently of the need to decrease its reliance on imported gas from a newly muscular Russia, to ignore a possible major source of energy here at home is inexplicable, critics say. The French government has outlawed not just exploitation but even exploration of potential shale gas reserves, making an informed debate on what's out there and what to do with it impossible, energy executives complain.

Although hydraulic fracturing has been safely utilized and regulated by individual states for over 60 years, under the leadership of President Barack Obama, the United States has wasted significant resources trying to discredit and eliminate use of the practice. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, through repeated false claims, has attempted to stifle domestic energy production and deny the supply of domestic affordable oil and natural gas to

consumers and manufacturers. While our executive branch has worked to undermine these technologies, I have closely examined the energy policies of European nations, and over the last several years observed the resulting negative impacts to your economies as a result of carbon constraints. Overlooking these adverse consequences, President Obama seeks to put in place similar carbon emissions-reducing programs which many European countries are now rolling back while India, Russia and China continue to scoff at similar constraints to their own economic future. I have grown keenly aware of the lack of any analysis legitimately quantifying the often undetectable benefits of these individual carbon emissions-reducing programs, particularly in contrast to their devastating economic impacts.

Despite the inability of anyone to provide credible empirical evidence that carbon trading schemes or other government renewable energy mandates have provided a net benefit for European economies, particularly while mounting evidence continues to indicate numerous countries are now reversing their position or rethinking their energy framework, there is clear empirical evidence that hydraulic fracturing and the resulting increased fossil resource production has been an economic boon to the United States.

As you are likely aware, hydraulic fracturing continues to provide incredible economic opportunity for the United States, including a manufacturing renaissance not envisioned just ten years ago. Despite numerous inaccurate portrayals of the risks of hydraulic fracturing, including by certain government officials and the radical wing of the environmental movement, for over 60 years the United States has conducted hydraulic fracturing safely and effectively. Today, newer technologies in this process are providing significant economic opportunity and remain one of the brightest spots in our economy. A recent analysis by Mark P. Mills, Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute, found the following:

- In the 10 states at the epicenter of oil & gas growth, overall statewide employment gains have greatly outpaced the national average.
- A broad array of small and midsize oil & gas companies are propelling record economic and jobs gains—not just in the oil fields but across the economy.
- America's hydrocarbon revolution and its associated job creation are almost entirely the result of drilling & production by more than 20,000 small and midsize businesses, not a handful of "Big Oil" companies. In fact, the typical firm in the oil & gas industry employs fewer than 15 people.
- The shale oil & gas revolution has been the nation's biggest single creator of solid, middle-class jobs—throughout the economy, from construction to services to information technology.
- In recent years, America's oil & gas boom has added \$300–\$400 billion annually to the economy. Without this contribution, GDP growth would have been negative and the nation would have continued to be in recession.

As deliberations over climate policies continue in the United States, and with unilateral action underway by President Obama, the relevant impacts from similar policies on European nations, including to consumers, business and grid reliability are not going unnoticed. I appreciate the challenges you face in rectifying the misunderstandings perpetuated by those opposed to hydraulic fracturing. However, I would be happy to provide you a more thorough analysis of the

benefits foregone by France's ongoing ban on hydraulic fracturing. If I can be of any assistance please let me know, as I remain hopeful France will take the opportunity available to utilize your resources made possible by the safe technologies developed here.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Vitter', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Vitter
United States Senator